

Test Your Dental IQ!

Try your hand at these questions on what's good for your teeth.



Questions

1. Chewing gum is always bad for your teeth.

☐ True ☐ False

2. You should replace your toothbrush every six months.

☐ True ☐ False

3. Nearly 35,000 new U.S. cases of oral cancer are diagnosed annually.

☐ True ☐ False

4. The amount you sleep affects your gums.

☐ True ☐ False

5. Dentists recommend fluoride consumption for adults and children of all ages.

☐ True ☐ False

6. Healthy teeth and gums reflect your body's overall health.

☐ True ☐ False



Check how you did with the answers on the back!

Oral health and wellness content provided by the Delta Dental Plans Association and the American Dental Association

Answers

1. False.

The American Dental Association (ADA) Council on Scientific Affairs has awarded the ADA Seal of Acceptance to several sugarless gum manufacturers. Studies have found that chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes after meals helps prevent tooth decay. Chewing increases saliva, which helps neutralize and wash away plaque acids. These acids can break down tooth enamel, creating the right conditions for decay. However, chewing sugarless gum should supplement and not replace daily flossing and twice-daily brushing.

2. False.

The ADA recommends replacing your toothbrush every three or four months—sooner if the bristles are frayed. People who are prone to infection because of a compromised immune system should consider rinsing toothbrushes with mouthwash before brushing and soaking them in an antibacterial rinse after brushing.

3. True.

Tobacco and alcohol are significant risk factors for oral cancer, but about one in four cases strikes people with no known risk factors. African Americans are one-third more likely than whites to contract oral cancer and almost twice as likely to die of it. The best way to prevent it is to avoid alcohol and tobacco and to schedule regular checkups with your dentist. This is one of the most treatable cancers—but only if detected early.

4. True.

Lack of sleep is second only to smoking among lifestyle factors that affect periodontal health, according to a study in the May 2007 Journal of Periodontology. Study participants who got seven to eight hours of sleep showed less progression of periodontal (gum) disease than those who slept six hours or less.

5. False.

While fluoride is heralded as a leading cavity fighter, swallowing too much fluoride can cause tooth discoloration in young children. As a result, children younger than age 2 shouldn't use fluoridated toothpaste. Children ages 2 and older need only a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

6. True.

The mouth can be a window to the body's overall health, the American Dental Association says. Signs of nutritional deficiencies, drug abuse, certain chronic diseases, and other conditions often show up in the mouth. Research has also found a link between periodontitis and heart disease and stroke.

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